

The President's Daily Brief

27 November 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 November 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Fighting along the East Pakistani border seems to have eased somewhat as both Indian and Pakistani officials acknowledge how excessive some claims have been. The Pakistanis have failed so far to obtain a firm public statement of support from Peking. (Page 1)

Premier Pham Van Dong's visit to Peking apparently has eased Sino - North Vietnamese tensions. (Page 3)

On Page 4 we review the Laotian military situation.

We have additional evidence that the Communists in South Vietnam are having difficulty in countering Saigon's pacification program. (Page 5)

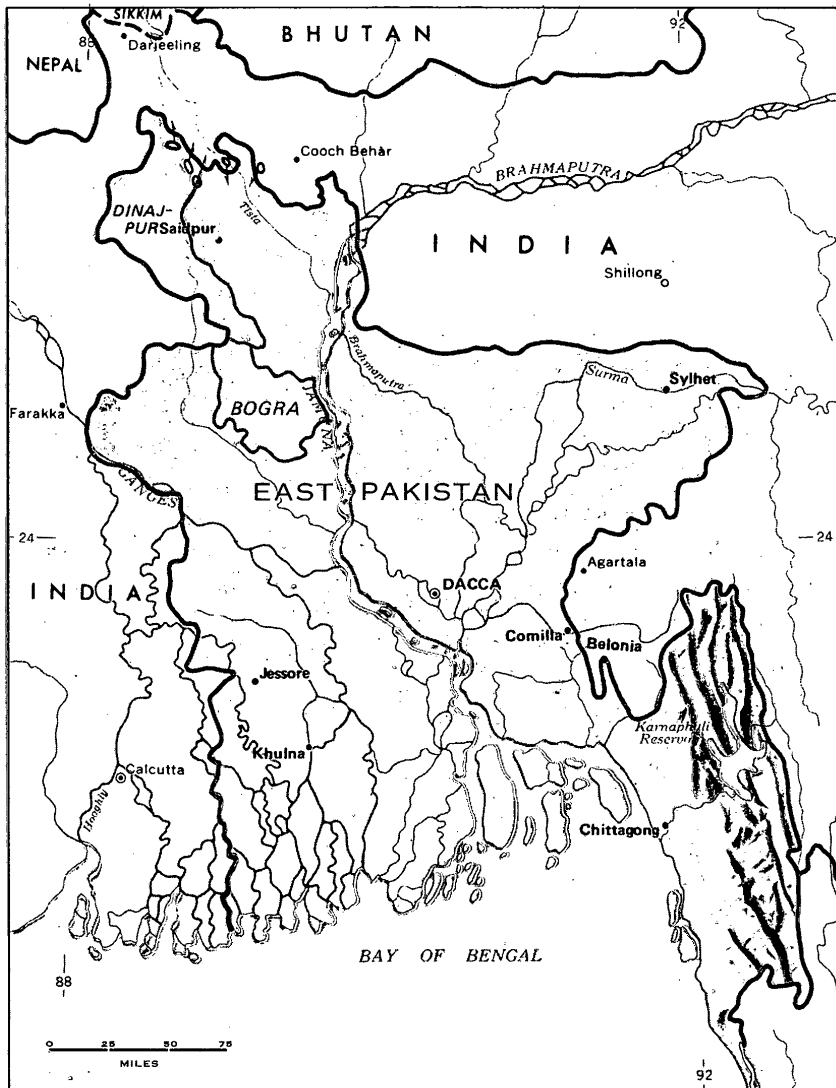
On Page 6 we discuss the implications of the agreement between Britain and Rhodesia.

Ecuador

(Page 7)

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY***INDIA - PAKISTAN - COMMUNIST CHINA**

Fighting continues at a somewhat slower pace along the East Pakistani border, with clashes again reported near Jessore and in the Belonia salient. Indian troops apparently made a new strike into the northwestern part of the province just above the Bogra-Dinajpur district line.

Representatives of both sides privately acknowledge the excessiveness of their public claims. The military adviser to the governor of East Pakistan yesterday told US officials in Dacca that none of the cross-border attacks had been in greater than two-battalion strength and that he believed that regular Indian troops remained inside East Pakistan only near Jessore. He admitted that the Mukti Bahini controls five small enclaves near the border and stated that the guerrillas are growing stronger throughout the interior, including near Dacca. In Calcutta, Indian Army and Bangla Desh spokesmen have told US officials that the Mukti Bahini controls no more than 1,100 square miles along the border, out of East Pakistan's total land area of 59,000 square miles, although they state that guerrilla units deep inside the province may control an additional 10,000 square miles.

On the diplomatic front, President Yahya yesterday responded enthusiastically to Ambassador Farland's suggestion that Pakistan request the UN to station observers on the Pakistani side of the borders with India, and said he would instruct his ambassador at the UN to make the request "immediately." He believed this would either prove to the world that the Indians are involved in the attacks or give New Delhi pause before engaging in new "aggression."

Japanese and Belgian UN delegations are taking soundings on separate draft resolutions calling for a cessation of hostilities but lacking any demand for withdrawal of troops. While finding most Security Council members neutral, friendly or sympathetic, the Belgians report a negative response from the Chinese as well as the Soviets and Poles. The Chinese delegate claimed to have no position at the moment, but termed the matter an internal Pakistani matter in which other states and the UN should not interfere.

(continued)

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The Chinese are currently showing a marked restraint toward Islamabad, in contrast to Moscow's support for New Delhi.

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Yesterday NCNA carried a speech by the head of a Chinese economic delegation visiting Pakistan that contained an innocuous and undefined promise of Chinese support "if" Pakistan should be threatened with foreign aggression. Peking media also all but ignore reports of fighting in East Pakistan.

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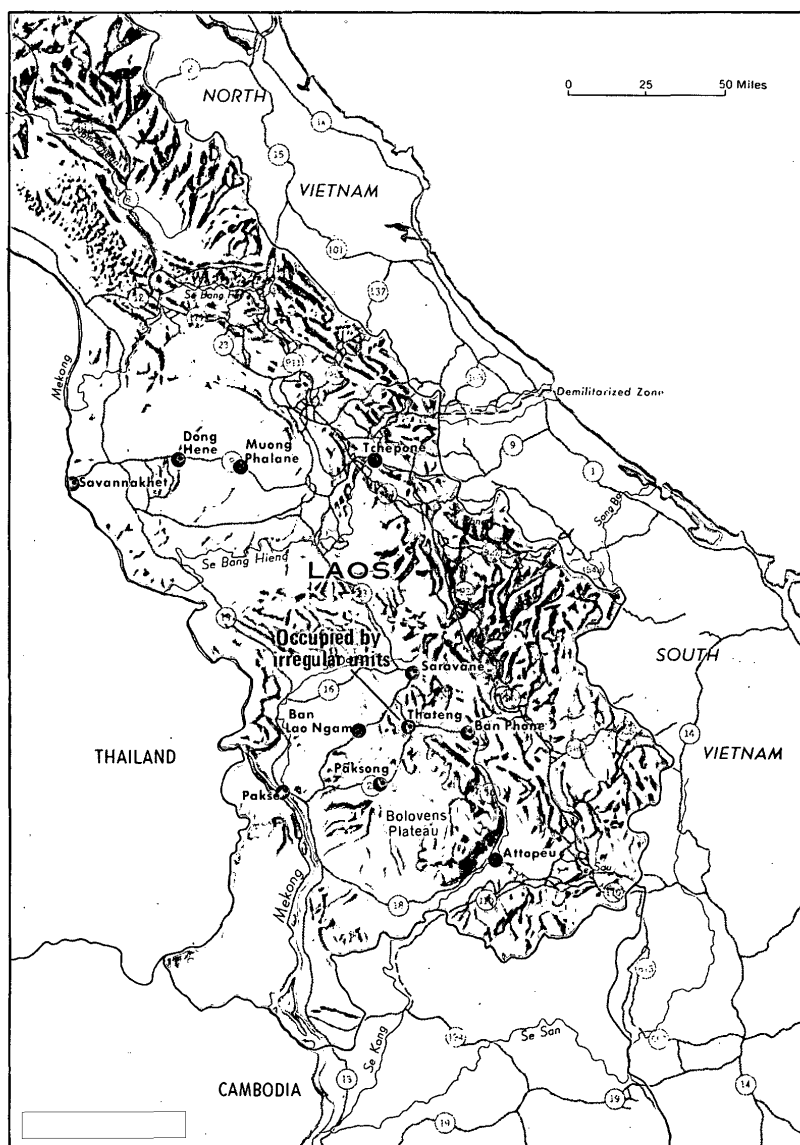
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NORTH VIETNAM - COMMUNIST CHINA

Premier Pham Van Dong's just concluded five-day visit to Peking apparently has eased Sino - North Vietnamese tensions. There were no hints of Hanoi's distrust of Peking's intentions, evident since the announcement of President Nixon's visit to China, in North Vietnamese speeches during the visit and in the final communiqué. Instead, the visitors expressed effusive gratitude for Chinese aid. The Chinese, for their part, made it clear that Peking does not intend to sell out Hanoi. "You and you alone," said Premier Chou En-lai in a speech on 23 November, "are entitled to decide the affairs" of Vietnam.

The Chinese left no doubt that they are solidly behind Hanoi's seven-point negotiating proposal. The tougher and more comprehensive presentation of Hanoi's demands in the communiqué continues a recent trend. The communiqué's version of the first of the "two basic points," for instance, now involves cessation of all US military and military-related activity in both parts of Vietnam. The formulation of the second point, which calls for an end to US support for the Thieu government, now suggests that a cessation of US economic as well as military aid to Saigon is one of Hanoi's preconditions.



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● Government-held location ○ Communist-held location

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LAOS

A task force of government irregulars on Thursday occupied Thateng, which had become an important logistic center north of the Bolovens since it fell to the Communists in April 1969. Another irregular force, operating in the Ban Phone region to the east, has so far encountered little resistance, which is surprising because Ban Phone lies astride a potentially important logistic route to Cambodia.

The government has now regained a sizable portion of the territory lost to the Communists in this area of Laos over the past two or three years. We doubt that it hopes to hold all of it during the dry season, however. The area is important to the Communists as a buffer to the infiltration corridor. The North Vietnamese may be expected to counterattack in the coming months with forces already available, and they may well bring in reinforcements.

The Communists are faring better in the central panhandle, where they have pushed government units well to the west of Muong Phalane. Troop commanders report that substantial North Vietnamese reinforcements have moved into the area, [redacted] what may be new, possibly battalion-sized, units. [redacted] the North Vietnamese intend to go at least as far west on Route 9 as Dong Hene, which they captured during the last dry season.

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In north Laos, infiltration groups are continuing to move toward the Plaine des Jarres. At least 6,500 troops are now involved.

The Communists also appear to be setting the political stage for their dry season offensive. Lao Communist leader Souphanouvong on 20 November sent a harsh letter to Prime Minister Souvanna reiterating that a total bombing halt must precede any talks and castigating Souvanna for "conspiring" with the US to increase the level of fighting. In addition, a North Vietnamese Embassy official in Vientiane recently cold-shouldered a US Embassy officer who tried to sound him out on the subject of possible Lao peace talks.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

We have additional evidence that the Communists are having difficulty in countering Saigon's pacification program.

--A recent COSVN directive warned that counter-pacification methods must be adjusted to the "realities of the situation." The document expressed particular concern that cadres were underestimating the government's ability to deny the Viet Cong access to the people. To help meet the problem, COSVN stressed the need for rebuilding the local cadre network.

--Viet Cong in a province in the Mekong delta were told recently to adopt a "cold war" strategy, evade large government operations, and rebuild the political network.

--Communist documents from other parts of the delta, believed to originate with COSVN, state that "political activities" currently are the most important part of the revolution. Cadre are instructed to get back in touch with the people and to build up their local organizations.

--A recent series of articles in the North Vietnamese army journal suggested the need for a better coordinated anti-pacification effort, possibly to be combined with a bigger military effort.

Despite the hint of increased anti-pacification measures, the Communists apparently intend in the short term to continue to rely primarily on low-keyed activities such as exhorting the cadre. This applies especially to the southern half of the country, where Communist military capabilities are weakest.

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UK-RHODESIA-UN

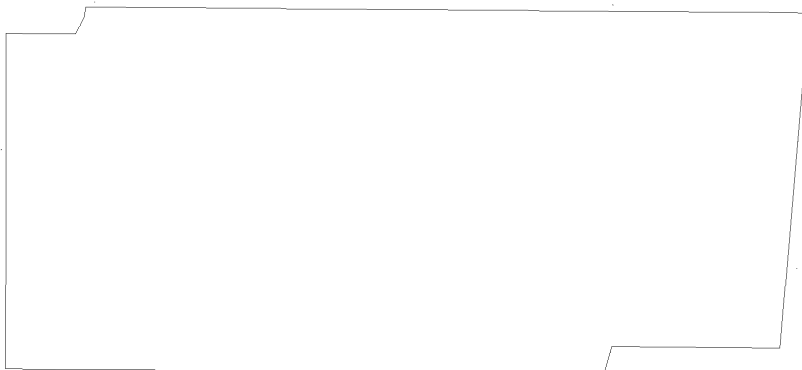
The agreement between Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home and Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith offers a theoretical possibility of bringing eventual rule by Rhodesia's African majority, but no prospect for reducing the contentiousness of the issue in the UN.

As outlined to the two parliaments and the UN Security Council on Thursday, the agreement calls for improvements for the Africans on several fronts, including immediately increased representation in the Rhodesian parliament once both governments ratify the accord. By a complicated formula, the African seats would eventually reach parity with those of the whites, but the addition of seats that might tip the balance in the Africans' favor would require a two-thirds vote of the parliament in Salisbury and hence be subject to an effective white veto.

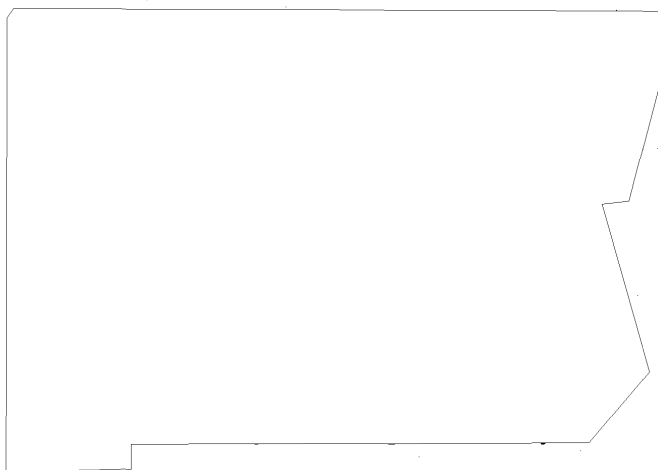
We expect that opposition will center on this ultimate veto and on the prolonged period for building African representation up to parity. Although the new provisions are to be entrenched in Rhodesia's constitution so that they cannot legally be removed without African, as well as white, approval, African opinion is generally skeptical of the value of such safeguards without outside enforcement. Hence, most African states are almost certain to oppose any British effort to remove UN sanctions, and the Communist permanent members of the Security Council can be expected to veto any formal move to end them.

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CUBA-ECUADOR



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NOTES

East Germany: Yesterday's re-election of Ulbricht as chairman of the Council of State implies that party chief Honecker believes he will need the older man in this ceremonial position to preserve an image of stability in a time of great change. Honecker may also believe that Ulbricht's voice can make an impact on Soviet leaders, who have been pressing for an early agreement with West Germany. Honecker is still clearly in command, however, and he used the elections to move himself and his deputy into places on the Council of State that were formerly held by Ulbricht's proteges.

Uruguay: President Pacheco's backing of Agriculture Minister Bordaberry has made him the favorite in tomorrow's general elections, even though Bordaberry has little personal political following. The traditional opposition Blanco party poses the only serious country-wide challenge to the incumbent Colorados, but in Montevideo the Communist-led Frente Amplio has concentrated a massive publicity campaign and could win in the mayoralty contest. [redacted] are concerned that the Tupamaros may be planning another major jail break to embarrass Pacheco, who has been stressing the law-and-order theme.

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